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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 201216Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8806
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY 2081
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0789
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY 0988
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY 2769
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO PRIORITY 1122
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 4656
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY 1826
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY 1679
RUMISTA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 001744

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STATE FOR WHA, WHA/CAR, DRL, INR/IAA; USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR
POLAD; TREASURY FOR OASIA-JLEVINE; DEPT PASS DEPT OF LABOR
(INTERNATIONAL)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [HA](#) [DR](#)
SUBJECT: SENATE RESOLUTION ON HAITIAN ISSUES

REF: A. SANTO DOMINGO 1258

[1](#)B. SANTO DOMINGO 1729

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Rolland W. Bullen, Reasons 1.4(b), (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) On July 11, the Dominican Senate unanimously passed a resolution on Haitian issues. The resolution comes on the heels of increased civil society criticism of the working conditions of (mostly Haitian and Haitian-Dominican) sugarcane cutters in the Dominican Republic (Ref A). Responding to what the Senate perceives as an "international campaign against the country by interested sectors," the declaration alleges that its civil society critics are not working to improve labor rights, but rather are motivated by "a profound hate of the Dominican nation." In addition, the motion erroneously claims that Pope Benedict recently "expressed his complete disagreement with (the campaign against the country)."

[1](#)2. (U) The resolution was sponsored by Prim Pujals Nolasco, a Senator from the ruling Dominican Liberation Party and Vice-Chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee. Following a lengthy preamble, the resolution calls for the following:

-- "Condemns the organizers of this campaign and calls on all national sectors to... disseminate information on the singular and enormous efforts that the Dominican state has carried out to alleviate the conditions of life of Haitian immigrants."

-- Reiterates its call on the international community to (i) help prevent Haitian emigration by providing additional economic assistance to Haiti and notes that "this humanitarian (request) of solidarity has not been heard or properly supported by the developed countries;" and (ii) to more rapidly release the assistance funds that have been pledged to Haitian reconstruction.

-- "Calls on the executive branch (of the Dominican

government) to carry out the broadest diplomatic action possible toward states, nongovernmental organizations, and international civil society, with the goal counteracting actions taken against the honor and reputation of the Dominican Republic."

(The full text of the resolution was sent by e-mail to WHA/CAR.)

COMMENT

¶3. (C) The Senate's resolution was simply a reiteration of longstanding Dominican perceptions and frustrations on the issue of Haitian immigration, and we are mindful of the need not to overreact to a non-binding declaration targeted mainly at the domestic audience.

¶4. (C) In fact, several other recent events brought good news on the Haitian issue, a rarity here. The Papal Nuncio -- whose views on this matter often align with the Embassy but are rarely expressed publicly -- issued one of his most helpful press statements in recent memory. The Nuncio wrote to El Caribe to protest the newspaper's misquoting of Pope Benedict (just as the Senate resolution does), saying that, "if the charity (toward Haitians) were so obvious, it would not have been necessary for the Holy Father to invite (Dominicans) to 'employ a good heart and treat Haitians with great charity.'"

¶5. (C) In addition, during Haitian President Preval's during July 12 visit here (Ref B), Dominican President Fernandez took some important -- albeit initial -- steps to distance his administration from deep-rooted unhelpful themes in the bilateral relationship. For example, Dominicans have traditionally treated the Haitian occupation, which ended in 1844, like it was yesterday. In contrast, during this visit Fernandez said that, "what unites (our two countries) is mastering our futures and the conquering the problems of the present." The long-serving former Dominican President Balaguer was infamous for his uncouth statements on perceived racial and cultural differences between Dominicans and Haitians, views which were well-received by his people. Fernandez, on the other hand, invited Preval to visit specifically to celebrate a joint cultural event, i.e. the 100th anniversary of the birth of Haitian author Jacques Romain. At one of the events, Fernandez even danced the Haitian gaga, which no doubt came as something of a shock to Dominican nationalists.

(U) This report and extensive other material can be consulted on our SIPRNET site,
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/>
BULLEN